

Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-04 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00 PRS-01 SMI-01 /037 R

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PM/ISO:JBURGESS

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P 052041Z OCT 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 247538

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TSPA:EAIR MILI:MO

SUBJECT:MOROCCAN REQUEST FOR INFO -- UFOS

REF: RABAT 5209; STATE 244918

1. IT IS DIFFICULT TO OFFER ANY DEFINITIVE EXPLANATION AS TO THE CAUSE OR ORIGIN OF THE UFOS SIGHTED IN THE MOROCCAN AREA BETWEEN 0100 AND 0130 LOCAL TIME 19 SEPTEMBER 1976.

2. AN EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION OF THIS SUBJECT WAS MADE IN THE US IN 1969; SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS, E.U. CONDON, PUBLISHED BY BANTAM BOOKS, NEW YORK. THIS STUDY INDICATES THAT DETAILED SIGHTINGS OF UFOS BY RELIABLE WITNESSES CAN BE EXPLAINED IN MANY WAYS, E.G.: IN TERMS OF LOCAL BALLOON, AIRCRAFT, OR SATELLITE ACTIVITY; BY METEOROLOGICAL AND ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS, INCLUDING METEOR EVENTS; AND BY ASTRONOMICAL OBJECTS.

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3. THE USG IS UNAWARE OF ANY US AIRCRAFT OR SATELLITE ACTIVITY, EITHER MILITARY OR CIVILIAN, IN THE MOROCCAN AREA WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN FOR SUCH SIGHTINGS ON THE 19 SEPTEMBER 1976. THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE AIRCRAFT FLIGHTS OR OTHER COUNTRIES OR UNUSUAL ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS OR EVENTS AS A POSSIBLE CAUSE.

4. THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF UFOS HAS BEEN ONE OF MUCH CONTROVERSY. AT PRESENT, THERE IS NO USG AGENCY STUDYING THIS MATTER, THE VIEW BEING THAT SUCH SIGHTINGS, WHERE SUFFICIENTLY DETAILED AND RELIABLE DATA ARE AVAILABLE, CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO NATURAL CAUSES AND THAT FURTHER STUDY IS NOT WARRANTED.

5. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO MAJOR METEOR SHOWER IN SEPTEMBER, THE SPORADIC METEOR RATE IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE IS AT A MAXIMUM IN THE EARLY MORNING AND IN THE AUTUMN MONTHS. BUT, METEORS ARE USUALLY VISIBLE AT AN ALTITUDE AROUND 100 KM, NOT 1 KM. HOWEVER, SUBJECTIVE ESTIMATES OF THE HEIGHT OF SUCH SIGHTINGS ARE USUALLY TOO LOW. THE FLAT TRAJECTORY SW TO NE COULD CONCEIVABLY BE COMPATIBLE WITH A METEOR, OR DECAYING SATELLITE. TANGENTIAL TRAJECTORIES ARE NOT THE MOST LIKELY FOR METEORS, BUT ARE NOT IMPOSSIBLE. IT IS UNLIKELY FROM THE DESCRIPTION THAT THE EVENT COULD HAVE BEEN A REFLECTION FROM A POLAR ORBITING SATELLITE.

6. WE ARE CHECKING FURTHER WHETHER OR NOT THIS PHENOMENON WAS SIGHTED BY THE SMITHSONIAN ASTROPHYSICAL OBSERVATORY'S GROUND STATION IN SOUTHERN SPAIN. THE CONTACT AT THE SAO, CAMBRIDGE, MASS., IS JAMES CORNELL, PHONE 617-495-7461.

7. IF THIS EVENT WERE A METEOR, A COMPARABLE SIGHTING IN THE US WOULD BE THE ALBERTA FIREBALL OF AUGUST 1972 WHICH TRAVELED S TO N FROM LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, USA TO EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA AND WAS ROUGHLY TANGENTIAL TO THE EARTH'S SURFACE, ITS LOWEST POINT IN ALTITUDE BEING ABOUT 40 KM. THIS WAS A VERY STRIKING OCCURRENCE AND ONE IN WHICH THE METEOR SEEMS TO HAVE ENTERED AND THEN LEFT THE ATMOSPHERE.

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8. IN ORDER TO ANALYZE THE MOROCCAN EVENT THOROUGHLY, FURTHER DESCRIPTIONS OR PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE LOCAL AREA WOULD BE NEEDED. IN THE MEANTIME, ONE WOULD TEND TO BELIEVE THAT THE EVENT WAS A METEOR, AND PROBABLY A SPECTACULAR ONE OR ON ACCOUNT OF THE DESCRIPTION OF SLOW VELOCITY, NO NOISE, AND BURNING FRAGMENTS, A DECAYING SATELLITE PART, OF WHICH THERE IS NO PRECISE RE-ENTRY RECORD. KISSINGER

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